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Letter dated 1 October 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to forward herewith a statement of the delegation of the Republic of Albania in its exercise of the right of reply to the letter submitted by the Permanent Representative of Serbia and distributed by your office as document A/63/377 (see annex).

I will be grateful if you would arrange for the present letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 8.

(*Signed*) Adrian **Neritani**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 1 October 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The irreversible reality of an independent Kosovo has been met with a growing welcome from all corners around the world. Thanks to the maturity of the people and Government of Kosovo and the international presence there, the Serbian-inspired and anticipated worst case and apocalyptic scenarios failed to happen. According to the Secretary-General's latest reports, the situation in Kosovo continues to remain calm. As the President of the Republic of Albania mentioned in his speech, the United Nations has, in fact, been an important part of the successful efforts of the international community in Kosovo and we are grateful for that. This is a legacy that the United Nations Member States, even Serbia, are obliged to respect.

Building peace, stability and democracy continues to be a very difficult task for some left alone in dark corners in the Balkans. We share belief with others, in which we cordially urge Serbia to join, that this century can be built upon different values, that will not involve the death of innocent en masse victims in four consecutive bloody wars, ethnic cleansing and genocide against hundreds of thousands of people. Only nine years ago, Serb military and police operations forced over 1 million Kosovar Albanians into a biblical exodus; thousands were killed and thousands of others disappeared in mass graves, including some inside Serbia proper. This was clearly State-run ethnic cleansing, and only the intervention of the international community saved an entire population from disappearance.

Albania has always played a constructive and moderating role in the region, and this has been continuously appreciated by the international community.

Standing up to the responsibilities of modern times requires a new approach. The hypocrisy of self-victimization is disingenuous and dangerous. The self-sustained and engineered fear of the so-called precedent continues to show the same mark of hatred and aggressive revenge. As long as perpetrators and war criminals are captured and their protectors abide by and do not trivialize the outstanding obligations of international law, the future of the Balkans will have already entered its new and stable phase.